

CHAPTER 1

1 | PLANNING PROCESS & CONTEXT

The Murchison Road corridor in Fayetteville is an important historical, cultural and transportation connection stretching between downtown Fayetteville and Fort Bragg. The route connects military personnel, civilian residents, and visitors to destinations within the community and to points north and west of the city. Approximately 23,000 vehicles travel along the corridor daily, demonstrating its importance to the City of Fayetteville and the region’s transportation network. Given its high use and pivotal location, the corridor has potential to contribute greatly to anticipated community growth in upcoming years. However, given its current state, the corridor is in great need of improvement in order to realize its potential.

Effective improvement of a complex corridor such as Murchison Road requires careful planning and the inclusion of multiple specialized entities. This comprehensive corridor study for Murchison Road has been prepared by Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. (KHA) on behalf of the City of Fayetteville and the Fayetteville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (FAMPO) in cooperation with the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT). Based on sound engineering and planning principles, strong community outreach, and a solid implementation plan, the plan described herein seeks to address physical changes to the corridor while building upon the community’s vision for the corridor.

background & history

The history of Fayetteville is tied to its roots as a key transportation center. The area was originally settled in 1739 by Scottish immigrants, who arrived by the Cape Fear River. It served as an inland port and hub of the early plank roads system and, accordingly, as a focal point of government and commerce. The “Fayetteville and Western” plank road served in a similar way to Murchison Road today by linking downtown Fayetteville to locations to the north and west. Proclaiming the area’s past, a historical marker

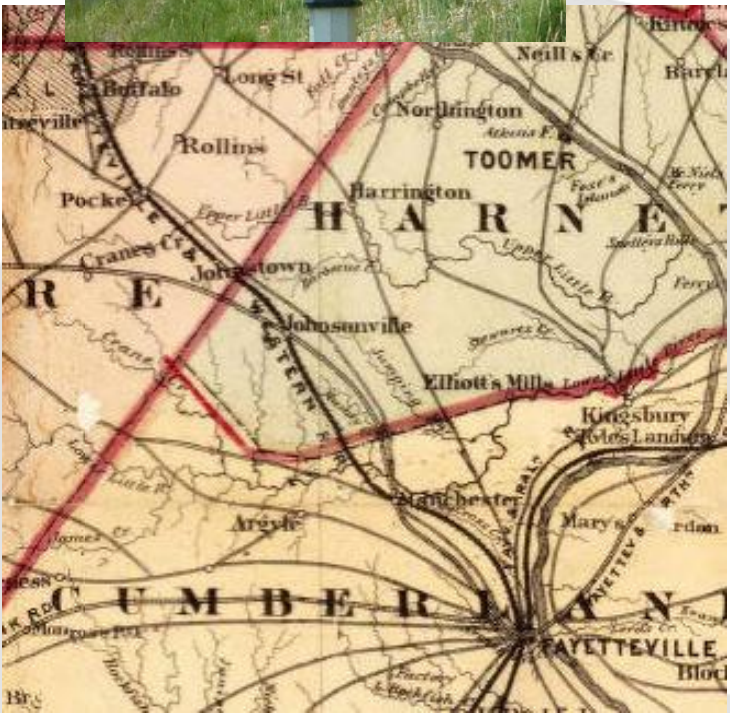
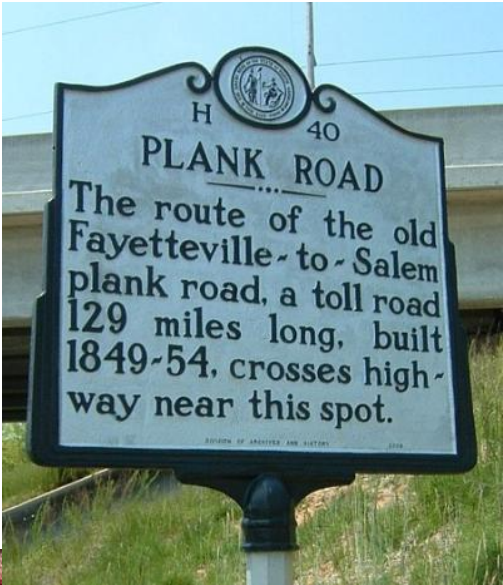
nearby identifies where the former plank road’s path crosses what is now Murchison’s adjoining road, NC 24/87.¹

Naturally lending itself to settlement, Fayetteville was founded in 1783 and was named after the French General and Revolutionary War hero Marquis de Lafayette. The NC legislature periodically met in Fayetteville after the Revolution. In 1789, the legislature ratified the US Constitution and chartered the University of North Carolina at a meeting in Fayetteville. The city has since been rebuilt twice, after the Fire of 1831 and after the Civil War. Throughout its history and into the present, the City has been known for its cultural diversity and military presence.

In the present, centrally located Fayetteville State University plays a significant role in the city and in the Murchison Road corridor. Located at the south end of the corridor, the university stands as the second oldest public education institution in the State. Its history began in 1867 with the purchase of land for the education of African American children in Fayetteville. The institution soon became known as the Howard School. Shifting its purpose in the following years, the school became a training institution for the education of African American teachers in 1877 and expanded significantly around the turn of the century. Receiving state and regional accreditation in 1939 as Fayetteville State Teachers College, the school became authorized to grant the degree of Bachelor of Science in Education. It acquired its present name and designation as a regional university in 1969 and became a constituent institution of the University of North Carolina System in 1972.²

Top: This historical marker is located just north of Fort Bragg on NC 24/87, the road into which Murchison flows before it veers east

Bottom: “This Month in North Carolina History, April 1854 – The Fayetteville and Western Plank Road” A plank road is shown running between Fayetteville and Manchester runs just south of Cross Creek.



¹ <http://www.visitfayettevillenc.com/community/history.html>

² “Fayetteville State University’s History” <http://library.uncfsu.edu/archives/HistoryFSU.htm>



Located at the opposite (north) end of the study corridor from Fayetteville State University, Fort Bragg stands as a major landmark and as the primary driver of much of Fayetteville's activity. This has not always been the case. The complex today known as Fort Bragg first became military property in 1918, when 127,000 acres were designated as a U.S. Army installation in preparation for World War I. On August 21 of that year, Camp Bragg became a field artillery site, named after Confederate General Braxton Bragg, a North Carolinian and a former artillery officer. Congress made the decision in February 1922 that all artillery sites to the east of the Mississippi River were to become permanent Army posts. The camp's name and designation were changed to Fort Bragg on September 30.¹

After growing slowly for many years, the Selective Service Act and the threat of World War II caused a dramatic increase in the number of soldiers from 5,400 in the summer of 1940 to 67,000 less than a year later. In 1942, the first airborne units trained at the base in preparation for combat, and Fort Bragg became widely known as the "home of the airborne" in 1951. Together, Fort Bragg and the neighboring Pope Air Force Base form one of the largest military complexes in the world.² The military individuals and families stationed at Fort Bragg live in Fayetteville and in the surrounding communities, and many of them frequent Murchison Road on a daily basis.

PHASE I

The changing face of Murchison Road has prompted city leaders and local officials to take a proactive approach to its history. This study of Murchison Road is not the only recent study of the corridor. Instead, it stems from and builds upon the findings of a more general study subtitled "Phase I". In December 2007, the City of Fayetteville commissioned Land Design and project partner Basile Baumann Prost Cole & Associates (BBPC) to prepare a land use and economic development plan for the Murchison Road corridor and respective area. The study area extended from downtown and Martin Luther King Jr. Freeway (US 401) to Fort Bragg and the future I-295 Fayetteville Outer Loop corridor extension. Land Design has been retained (for Phase II planning efforts) as a subconsultant to assist in coordinating

the land use integration, design alternatives, and charrette activities. The Phase I plan aimed to:

- Enhance quality of life
- Establish a hierarchy for investment
- Review mobility and transportation issues
- Boost the Murchison Road Corridor and City of Fayetteville's image and attractiveness for investment
- Provide approaches to corridor development within a limited timeframe
- Identified corridor strengths, issues, and opportunities.

The findings of the Phase I study are essential to consider in this second phase of the planning process as the plan transitions from general theoretical principles to specific physical changes.

MARKET ANALYSIS

Understanding the market in the study area helps to provide context for making effective decisions regarding physical changes to the corridor. The state of the market in the study area depends on demographic and economic trends as well as development opportunities for office space, housing, lodging/hospitality, and retail. The following summary condenses the findings from the Phase I market analysis report.

Demographic Profile

The corridor area's population primarily includes minority and low income residents who have not seen significant public investment in their community for some time. Therefore, the corridor plan must complement economic development initiatives and community investment while enhancing quality of life. Demographic and economic trends affect the real estate market and retail demand potential along the corridor. Currently, the median household income in the study area is less than 60% of that in the county, and the median home value is less than 75%. The rent-to-own ratio is less than 65% of that in the county. Therefore, significant potential exists for the area to grow in coming years. The presence of Fort Bragg and



Murchison Road Corridor Study Phase I Report

¹ http://www.visitfayettevillenc.com/community/ftbragg_popeafb.html

² "Fort Bragg History" <http://www.bragg.army.mil/history/fortbragghistoryshort.htm>

CHAPTER 1

Fayetteville State University, particularly given their planned expansions, provide future opportunities for economic development.

Market Trends

Murchison Road has experienced a lack of development activity recently. In terms of office space, much of the current space is scattered. However, the corridor’s proximity to Fort Bragg and its growing need for office space, provides opportunity for the future. The current housing situation with lively neighborhoods and good quality homes helps drive residential development along the corridor. For lodging, the only options are located in downtown Fayetteville and the Cross Creek Mall area. Murchison’s lack of immediate lodging competition, proximity to the future I-295, and large suitable land parcels establish strong potential for lodging and hospitality development. Stemming from the current state of the corridor, the relatively low lease rates in the area provide ease into the market for investors interested in office space, housing, or lodging/hospitality.

The success of the different types of development are largely dependent on one another. The corridor provides many opportunities for retail investment: nearby markets are underserved, current retail has potential for expansion and renovation, and possible retail sites are available in the area. However, the current lack of successful retail, high vacancy rates, and absence of national retailers in the area may impede the corridor’s progression.

Market Potential

At this time, the area is particularly well-suited to sustain retail providing food and drink because of the large gap between supply and demand for groceries and restaurants. Murchison Road needs high-quality mixed-use development to foster the relationship between retail and office space, housing, and lodging/hospitality. In general, market demand is moderate in the short-term future (0-5 years) and greater in the long-term future (5-10 years), as shown in **Table 1**. At this time, the need for retail and residential development is high, the need for office and lodging/hospitality development is moderate, and the need for industrial development is low. The physical improvements planned for the corridor are expected to spur the economic vitality of the surrounding area and, in turn, provide better quality of life for the citizens who frequent the street.

COMMITTED PROJECTS

NCDOT oversees the State’s Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), a seven-year spending budget that allocates funding for transportation projects throughout the state. **Table 2** lists the four TIP projects that are currently slated for construction in the vicinity of the study area.

Table 1. Phase I Economic Forecast
SHORT-TERM DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL (0-5 YEARS)
24,000-34,000 square feet of retail space 80-110 residential units - Demand for an additional 70-120 units due to expected military growth in the region due to the Fort Bragg expansion 50,000-93,000 square feet of office space
LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL (5-10 YEARS)
90,000-117,000 square feet of retail space 110-135 residential units 82,000-150,000 square feet of office space

Table 2. TIP Projects Planned in the Vicinity of the Study Area

Project Number	Description	Expected Construction Schedule
U-2519	A new freeway (I-295) is to be built as part of the Outer Loop (X-2) from I-95 south of Fayetteville to west of NC 24-87 (Bragg Boulevard)	present-2015; some portions remain unfunded
U-4444	Widening is to occur on a 3.6-mile stretch of NC 210 (Murchison Road) from the Outer Loop (X-2) to NC 24-97 (Bragg Boulevard) in Spring Lake	2009; some portions remain unfunded
U-4900	Additional lanes are to be added to NC 210 (Murchison Road) from the US 401 Bypass to Bernadine Street	ROW, mitigation, utilities - 2014; some portions remain unfunded
U-5015	Widening is to occur on a three-mile stretch of NC 210 (Murchision Road) from Rowan Street to the US 401 Bypass (Country Club Drive/Pamalee Drive)	currently unfunded

Source: North Carolina Department of Transportation State Transportation Improvement Program: 2009-2015. Published June 2008.

need for project

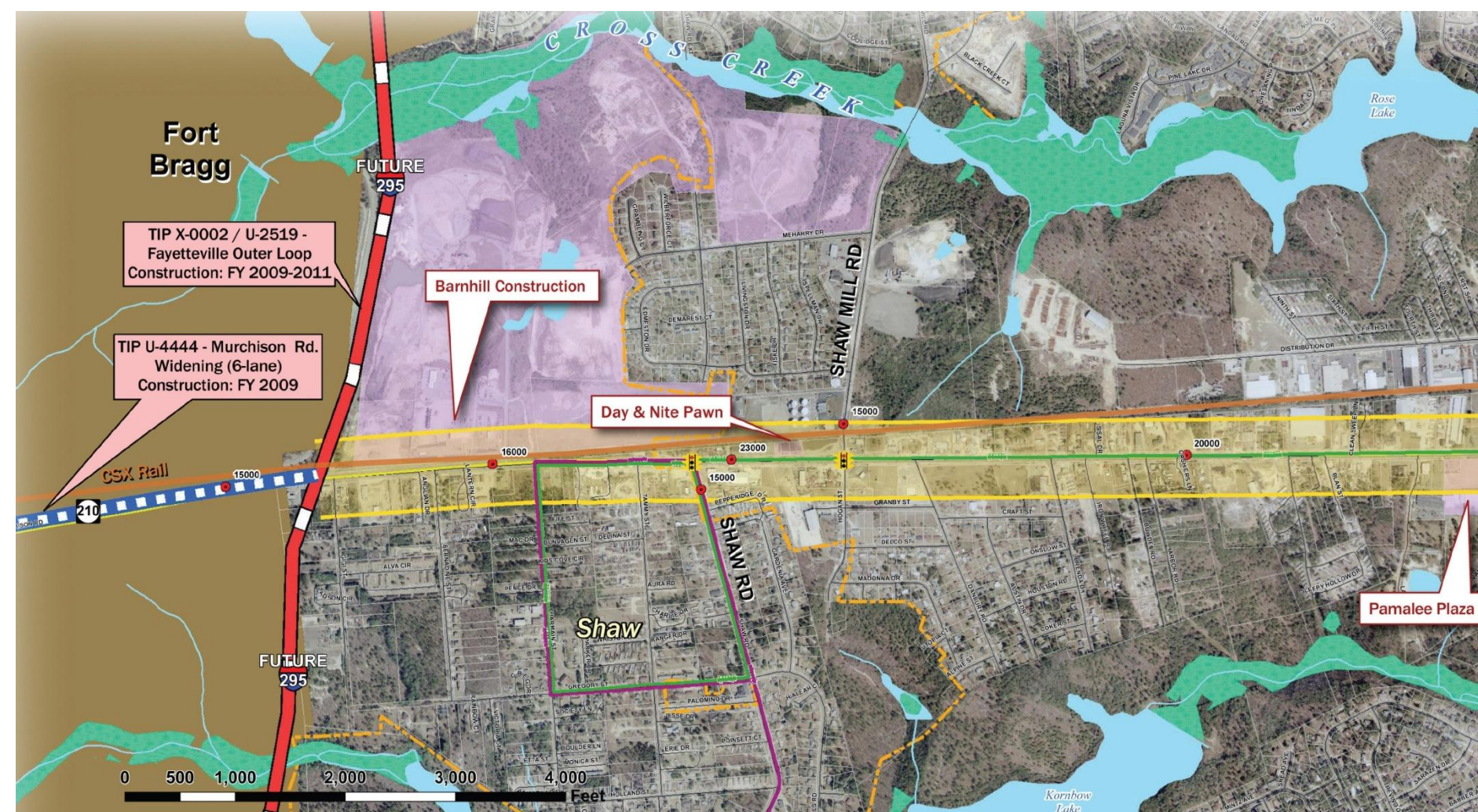
With the future closure of Bragg Boulevard to through traffic, BRAC expansion plans at the base, the proposed Northwest Gateway Plan, and the new I-295 connection, Murchison Road will experience dynamic changes in land development and traffic patterns. In an attempt to plan for these changes, this corridor study incorporates the results of extensive public outreach, traffic analysis, multimodal considerations, development and redevelopment opportunities (Phase I), design concepts, and a detailed “action plan”.

NCDOT completed a feasibility study (FS-0306A) recommending that the length of the corridor be widened to 6 lanes with 23-foot planted medians in a 150-foot right-of way. NCDOT faced a harsh response from the community who felt the cross-section created too many property and business impacts and clearly was not in the character of the area. Therefore, the City and FAMPO solicited help in finding a compromise between improving traffic operations and preserving neighborhood character.



study area

The study area (**Figure 1**) stretches from the US 401 Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard overpass of Murchison Road in the south to the future crossing of I-295 near the Fort Bragg boundary. Fort Bragg borders the study area at its northern tip and Fayetteville State University (FSU) borders the southern segment. Beyond the corridor itself, the project examined transportation needs for the area located between the Little Cross and Cross Creek streamways and evaluated connectivity issues within the area as well as across the two creeks.

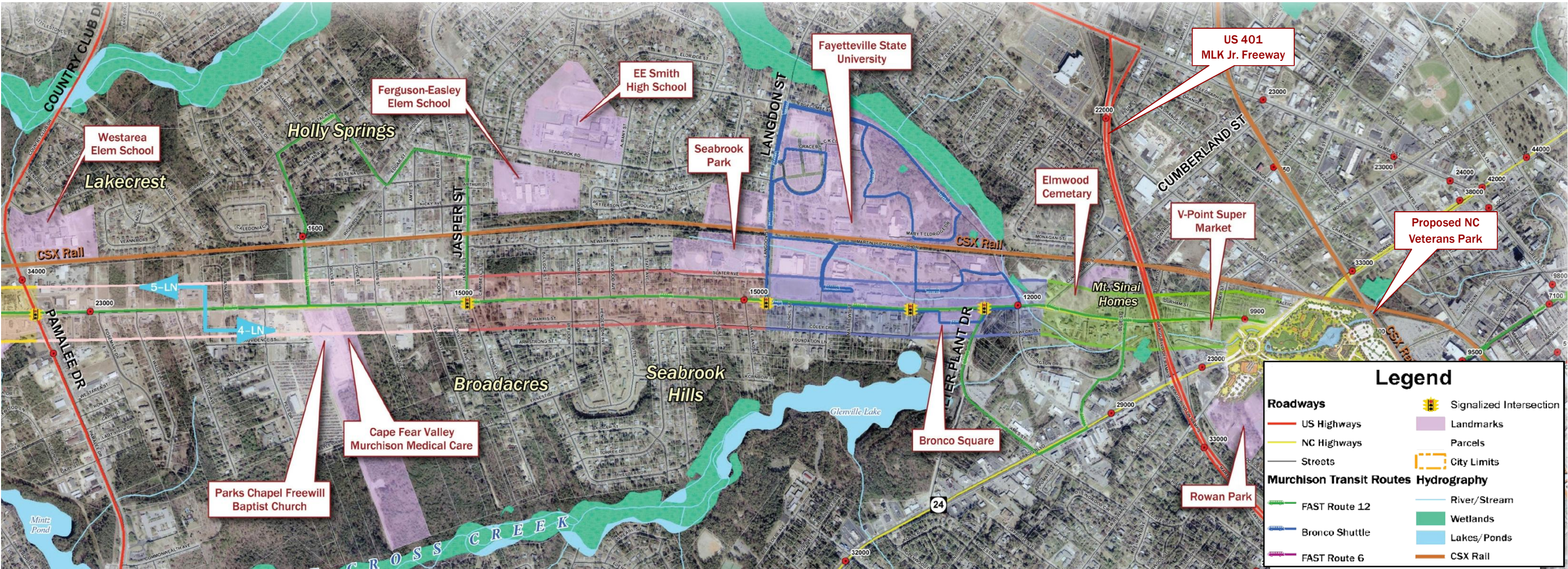


CHAPTER 1

The study area includes the intersections of the following significant thoroughfares with Murchison Road:

- Shaw Road
- Shaw Mill Road
- Pamalee Drive/Country Club Drive
- Jasper Street
- Langdon Street
- Filter Plant Drive

Figure 1. Murchison Road Study Area





planning process

Balancing the transportation needs of a growing urbanized area against increasingly competitive funding elements is a challenge that requires careful planning throughout the project. The process requires the collaboration of many public and private entities now and in the future to ensure the plan supports not only transportation goals but also land use, social, and economic goals of the area. This plan reflects lessons learned from past experiences and consideration of current initiatives in order to provide proactive and effective strategies for the future.

From the outset of the project, it was essential to integrate the planning and design process with local and regional planning initiatives to ensure the plan's reinforcement of the community's vision, local corridor context, and land use and environmental goals. Emphasis was placed on the role of local transportation networks, planned land use, and identified natural, historic, and economic resources. Innovative community involvement, resource sharing, and a multi-disciplinary approach were necessary to achieve a successful outcome.

The project's technical methods are rooted in traffic forecasting, operations analysis, and the development of design alternatives. However, stakeholder collaboration and public involvement are pivotal in assuring favorable integration with the community. The planning process included a host of activities involving the community:

- Existing Conditions Inventory
- Phase II Public Design Charrette
- Citizen Advisory Committee (i.e., Task Force)
- Stakeholder Interviews (public and private)
- Design Alternatives
- Public/Council Presentation

These activities are described in the following sections in greater detail.

EXISTING CONDITIONS INVENTORY

Before any public outreach activities took place, the project team conducted a field review of the Murchison Road Corridor to gain an understanding of its current status in terms of transportation, land use, design characteristics, and other considerations. The team took photographs, gathered field measurements, reviewed aerial images, and researched information relating to the corridor's condition and use.

PHASE II PUBLIC DESIGN CHARRETTE

The Phase II charrette allowed the consultant team to interact with community members, business leaders and local officials to better understand the local context, identify issues and constraints, and obtain feedback on design options. The charrette occurred over four days (June 23rd – 26th), and the majority of its activities took place in the nearby Smith Recreation Center. These activities included stakeholder interviews, public workshops, brainstorming sessions, and other planning activities specifically tailored to generate discussion.

The charrette gave stakeholders, the advisory committee members, and the general public the opportunity for “hands-on” involvement by sharing their thoughts on transportation needs in the study corridor without fear of public backlash. Continuous feedback from the charrette participants helped the project team recognize transportation access and mobility concerns, development opportunities, and natural and manufactured constraints while developing ideas for improvement.

Traffic engineers, landscape architects, and land use planners facilitated the charrette activities and developed concept renderings “on-the-spot” in response to comments from participants. The first day of the workshop allowed participants to “vent” their frustration and disappointment towards the lack of attention that the corridor had received. Throughout the charrette process, individual and group participants visited the work studio to view first-hand the findings, results, and ideas for improvements along the corridor. This continuous collaboration allowed for an open and transparent process with the public which provided

What is a Charrette?

The term “charrette” is the French word for “cart.” Initially, the term referred to the intense sessions by artists to finish works before they were collected by proctors and carted to salons for viewing and sale.

Today, the term is commonly used to refer to an intense, interactive community-based planning process. The process brings together citizens, stakeholders, local officials, and design professionals to work as a collective group to develop a shared vision and translate it into viable solutions. The benefits of a charrette include:

- Diverse participation ensures thorough discussion of issues, relationships, and alternatives
- Multidisciplinary design teams create realistic alternatives without having to revise work through multiple iterations
- Compact time frame challenges participants and facilitators to quickly and openly examine issues and progress toward a collective vision



- Public involvement occurs in a transparent, supportive environment conducive to the open discussion of issues and alternatives
- On-site locations enhance the design team's understanding of local issues and provides the context to the project's vision
- Creative illustrations convey complex solutions
- Team produces visual results that are viable

CHAPTER 1

direct feedback to the proposed improvements. By day four, the final public work session provided the opportunity for participants to reflect on the week's activities and provide additional feedback on the proposed improvements to the Murchison Corridor. Most comments received during the final day of the charrette were supportive, optimistic and appreciative.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Advisory Committee, also known as the Murchison Road Corridor Task Force (MRCTF), was formed to facilitate appropriate progress and to help ensure a valuable final result. The committee consisted of business owners, neighborhood residents, MPO representatives, NCDOT, FSU representatives, and City staff (engineers, planners, and the Assistant City Manager). The group met monthly between June and September 2008 to generate ideas and provide feedback on the overall study progress. The MRCTF also helped in decision-making, including selecting the preferred design alternative to present to City Council.

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Numerous stakeholders were interviewed during the planning process to gather a local perspective and specific information for developing successful design alternatives. During the four-day charrette, stakeholders representing the following groups were interviewed:

- Fayetteville Area System of Transit
- City Emergency Services (police and fire/rescue)
- City Parks and Recreation
- City and County planning departments
- City Council
- Business Owners/Property Owners
- City Economic Development
- Chamber of Commerce
- Park Chapel Freedom Baptist Church
- Fort Bragg
- Fayetteville State University

DESIGN ALTERNATIVES

After identifying problem areas and corridor issues at the charrette (Day 1) and gathering citizen input, the project team produced conceptual design options and ideas for the catalyst development opportunities to be presented to the public on Day 4. With the MRCTF taking on an advisory role and with traffic analysis providing operations information, the project team refined the alternatives and chose a recommended alternative to explore in greater detail and present to the MRCTF and City Council.

PUBLIC / COUNCIL PRESENTATION

The design alternatives and catalyst development projects were presented for refinement to the MRCTF as well as a city-hired development specialist. Based on suggested revisions, the project team presented findings, results, and final recommendations to the City Council during an open public forum.



the charrette

The four-day charrette was the most significant portion of the project's public outreach efforts. The day-by-day events of the charrette are described below.

DAY 1: WHO & WHY?

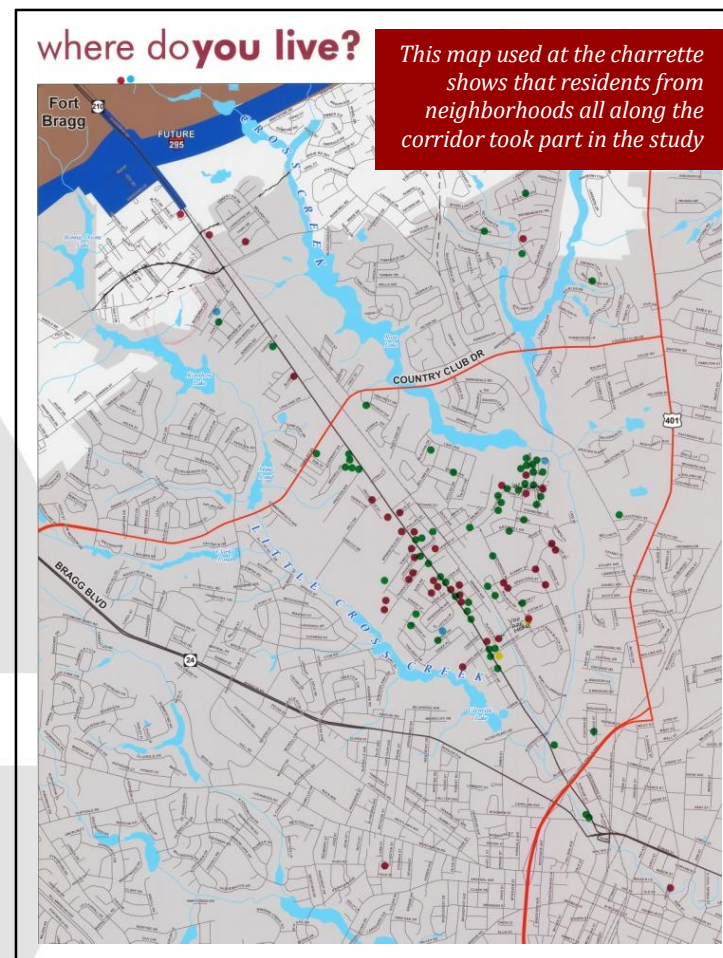
The first day of the charrette took place at the Smith Recreation Center and included both Stakeholder Interviews and the Public Kick-Off Meeting. The objective of the meeting was to validate the Phase I results and open the discussion to identify issues, problems areas, and concerns related to the transportation aspect of the corridor.

As mentioned previously, stakeholder interviews on the first day consisted of conversations with representatives previously listed. These interviews allowed uninterrupted dialogue with individuals in the community having particular knowledge or expertise related to the project. For example, representatives of the fire department were able to identify potential trouble spots for emergency response vehicles. Other potential developers shared their site plans and ideas for the community.

The public kick-off meeting, held later that evening, was open to all community members. With more than 150 attendees, the project team and community leaders actively engaged participants to integrate them into the planning process. An overview presentation introduced the purpose of the charrette, described the planning process, defined the corridor study area, and offered ways for the public to remain involved throughout the planning process. Following the presentation, a large-group discussion and many one-on-one conversations clarified

questions and revealed concerns for the project and its impact to the community. Some of the concerns related to the following issues:

- planning process
- image and perception
- safety (both vehicular and pedestrian)
- bike/pedestrian facilities
- traffic calming
- schedule and funding aspects of implementation



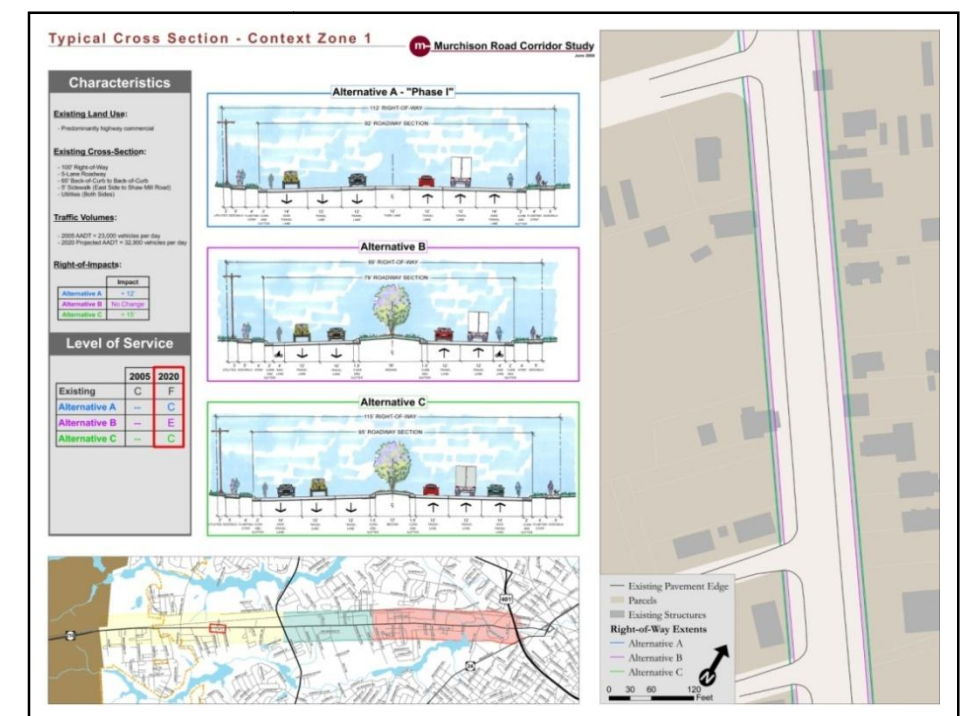
The material presented at the kick-off meeting was illustrative to help participants visualize potential concepts to the corridor. For the three segments of the study area, multiple alternative cross-sections were presented to gain feedback regarding design features such as median width, sidewalk placement, and streetscape elements. The figure to the right presents the alternative sections poster presented for one of the three segments within the study area.

Continuous feedback gathered throughout the planning process along with the information assembled from the stakeholder interviews was considered in developing the conceptual designs presented at the end of the charrette.



▲ A charrette facilitator explains the night's group planning activities at Public Workshop #1.

Participants considered cross-section alternatives for specific segments based on design elements, LOS and right-of-way impacts. ▼



CHAPTER 1

DAYS 2 & 3: WHAT & WHERE?

During the second and third days of the charrette, the project team revisited the corridor, gathered additional feedback, and translated observations and input into conceptual designs.

The project team began the second day by setting up the on-site design studio and meeting with City staff for an overview of the planning process that would unfold over the coming days. The team then toured the study area and reviewed the previous evening's public meeting. Afterwards, some team members brainstormed design concepts, while others conducted additional stakeholder interviews.

Following the stakeholder interviews, the charrette team began its work session that lasted the remainder of the second day and the majority of the third day. The team reviewed the comments submitted and voiced at the previous night's public meeting and considered them alongside the issues identified at the stakeholder interviews. The team summarized what they had heard into the following primary concerns and issues to be addressed during the planning study:

Vehicle Travel

- Southern Murchison – too narrow!
- Lower speed limit only if redesigned

Connections

- Police strongly support new connections
- Connect to downtown
- No Jasper St. connection
- Need connections to parks, FSU, community center, schools, and shopping

Alternative Travel

- Transit-cleaner, frequent, reliable
- Need for bike lanes – lower priority along Murchison Road

Redevelopment

- Phased, cost-effective improvements
- Need a catalyst project supported by city
- Redevelopment needed @ I-295 Interchange, Pamalee & Jasper
- Need economic opportunities

Pedestrians

- Pedestrian crossings dangerous
- Make area near Seabrook Park, FSU, & high school walkable
- Need sidewalks – both sides

Streetscape

- Clean up telephone poles
- Murchison needs a face-lift!
- Strong support – landscaped median
- Clean up “look” of corridor
- Charming neighborhoods

Public Image

- Image, image, image!!
- Change perception
- Give us choices
- Community neglected too long
- Residents are cautious of change
- Gentrification has occurred

Businesses

- Need grocery store
- Businesses support changes

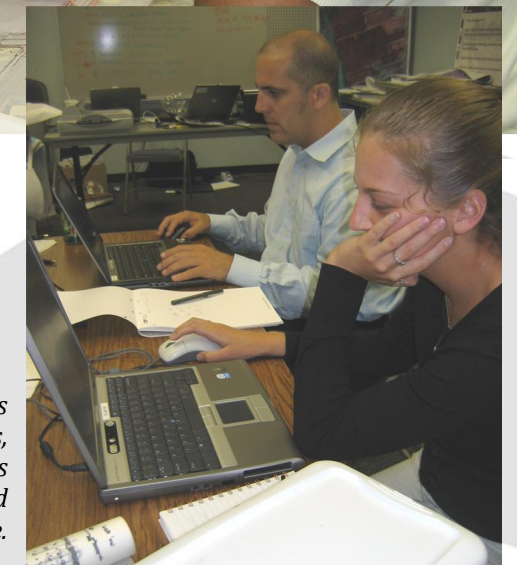
Security

- Good community watch participation
- Better lighting needed – safety
- Crime isn't that bad

Questions

- What will road look like?
- How will it impact my property?
- Will businesses be displaced?

Once they clarified the concerns of the interested parties, the project team worked to address the comments and respond appropriately in the conceptual designs. The team collaborated with the MRCTF and the public during a “pin-up” session on the third day. The team developed an overall vision for the corridor and established improvements that would fit within the context of that vision.



The project team works diligently on analysis, renderings, and designs during the second and third days of the charrette.



DAY 4: HOW & WHEN?

The fourth day of the charrette focused on blending the comments and ideas from the previous three days into a cohesive plan that combined the vision and core principles outlined previously. The project team prepared their findings, recommendations, and conceptual designs for presentation at the final workshop hosted at the Smith Recreation Center. During the previous two days, project designers had used the feedback offered at the first public meeting to revise the cross-section options. Those sections were then used to show the locations of existing buildings along the corridor so that viewers would be able to see how individual properties would be affected by each cross-section alternative.

Citizens were invited to review maps illustrating the alignments and other project-related plans. The maps and accompanying diagrams displayed large-scale concepts (i.e. an area-wide street plan) and regional connectivity (roads, bicycle, pedestrian and greenways) as well as location-specific improvements such as intersection treatments, gateways, and catalyst redevelopment projects. In addition, a “branding” exercise was presented to highlight particular theme concepts that could enhance the cultural and historical identity of the community that surrounds the Murchison Road corridor.

A more structured public review and comment period followed an informal presentation of the week’s findings, conclusions, and recommendations. Citizens asked for clarification on specific components of the plan and responded to the plans and findings. At the conclusion of the workshop, participants voted on their preferred alternative for each segment using dot stickers.

The public input gained from the charrette process ensured that citizen voices were heard and that stakeholder concerns were considered as the plan for the Murchison Road corridor began to take form. The plan that follows chronicles the output of this inclusive process.



BRENDA DRIVE TO ROSEMARY DRIVE - ALT A - 4-LANE WITH PLANTED MEDIAN AND SIDEWALKS

